

This Document Contains:

ANONYMITY & ACCOUNTABILITY REQUIREMENTS

SAMPLE SYSTEMS

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Members of the State Child Nutrition Services staff are finding schools operating outside of the system stated for them in the Policy Statement for Free or Reduced Price Meals, (SNP-14). Obtain from the Superintendent of Schools, attachment 4 to the Free and Reduced Price Meal Policy Statement. This describes the accountability system designated for your school by your superintendent. It must be used exactly as described. Any deviations or changes after the start of the school year must have prior approval from the Child Nutrition Services of the Maine Department of Education before implementation.

In collecting payments for meals and milk served, in distributing and collecting tickets/tokens, school administrators should insure that there is no overt identification of free meal and reduced price meal or free milk recipients. Care must be taken to prevent such identification in the serving line as well.

MEAL ACCOUNTABILITY - Any collection procedure must have a built-in accounting system to record accurately the number of full price, reduced price, and free meals served daily. Keeping these counts at point of service is a regulatory requirement. Milk Only and Pre-K/K Milk Program schools need to record the number of free milk and paid milks served on a daily basis.

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY - Systems of accountability for meals must also have financial accountability. Sufficient cash must be returned to cover the value of the tickets/tokens, or there must be a record of the names of those students charging meals. The series numbered tickets provide this type of accountability. To maintain financial accountability, the beginning ticket's series number must be subtracted from the series number of the last ticket sold each day. This will determine the number of tickets sold, which can then be used to verify the amount of cash receipts. Additionally, the number of tickets outstanding should be determined to balance potential versus actual income on a calendar month basis.

SAMPLE SYSTEMS

The following methods are given as examples because they have been effectively employed. They can be used equally well in the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program and Special Milk Program.

* **CHECKLIST ONLY**

All students go individually to a designated area or the teacher's desk. The teacher or other designated person collecting payment will have a coded list of which children pay full price, reduced price, or receive free lunches or free milk, and will collect accordingly. A checklist of names will be used in the cafeteria to record every child having lunch and/or milk. Some overlay system or code must be devised to count meals and milks served by category on a daily basis.

* **PAYMENT BY ENVELOPE**

The homeroom teacher provides each child with an envelope for daily or weekly payments. Pupils return the envelopes with payment if paying full or reduced price, or empty if free, either to the homeroom teacher or to the school office. At a specified time either the homeroom teacher or other school staff issue tickets/tokens accordingly. All tickets/tokens are identical except for a code number known only to authorized school personnel and used for accounting purposes. After service, all tickets/tokens collected are sorted and counted by type of service and payment categories.

Envelopes with the student's name and payment may be collected at point of service and sorted by meal category. A coded list will be used to determine those eligible for free and reduced price meals. Empty envelopes will be returned to the classroom teacher for use during the remainder of the week.

* **TICKETS/TOKENS**

- All students go to a designated area (e.g., school office, cafeteria, manager's office, pay station) at varying times during the day. At such times, those who pay full or reduced price do so and are issued a numbered ticket/token. Those approved for free meals are given a numbered ticket/token. A coded list of which children pay full price, reduced price, or receive free meals or milk is used to accurately collect money, distribute tickets/tokens, and record the transaction. All tickets/tokens are identical except for code numbers used for accounting purposes known only to authorized school personnel. Following service, all tickets/tokens collected are counted and posted by type of service and payment categories.
- All students who pay full or reduced price, purchase weekly or monthly tickets/tokens at a designated area and at varying times (to preclude possibility of lines, etc.) during the day. A coded list of which children pay full price, reduced price, or receive free meals or milk is used to accurately collect money, distribute tickets/tokens, and record the transaction. The school office will mail weekly or monthly tickets/tokens to the households of those children eligible for free lunches. All tickets/tokens are identical except for code numbers known only to authorized personnel and used for accounting purposes. Following service, all tickets/tokens collected are sorted and counted by type of service and payment categories.

- All students go to a designated area at varying times during the day, but they do not receive the tickets then. The purchased tickets, as well as tickets for recipients for free and reduced price meals or free milk are sent to the classroom each day. The teacher distributes the tickets by name just before meal time. The tickets are coded for accounting purposes. The tickets are collected in the serving line and a count of the number of meals served by type is made by checking the ticket codes.
- Parents are billed for the full price or reduced price meals their children are served. All payments are mailed in so that no money is collected in the classrooms. All participating students receive a monthly ticket which is punched each time the student eats. The tickets are coded and as the cashier punches the ticket, he/she notes the code and makes a tally of the type of meal served on a tick sheet described below.

*** CASH REGISTER**

Notices must be posted throughout the school that students can pay for meals weekly or monthly in the office or other designated areas. No reference is made to paid, free or reduced price meals or free milk. A coded list of which students pay full price, reduced price, or receive free meals or milk is used to accurately collect money, and record the transaction.

Students either pay cash or the cashier acknowledges that the student have prepaid and require no payment at the register. Following service, the cash register tape is tallied. A school without a cash register can tally a tick sheet as described below.

*** COMPUTERIZED ELECTRONIC SYSTEM**

Notices must be posted stating prepayment of meals is available. Students would deposit money to their account. The student's pin number, identification card number, or bar code would be entered electronically into the computer. The computerized electronic system would reduce the account balance and track the number of meals served by category. A day end printout to complete the paperwork is generated and kept on file.

*** TICK OR TALLY SHEET**

In schools which do not have a cash register, or which do not collect at point of service a weekly or monthly ticket, a daily tick sheet may be used to record meals served. The tick sheet should be set up as follows:

Date_____

<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>
1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7
etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.

When the cashier acknowledges the student, the category is determined and a mark is made through the next available number under the category. In the above example, the cashier has recorded: five A (free) meals tickets; three B (reduced) meals; four C (prepaid full price) meals; six full price cash lunches, D category; and three reduced price cash lunches, E category. At the end of meal service, the last number struck in each category determines the number of meals served. When a tick sheet is used only free, reduced and prepaid full price need to have tickets. A tick sheet is like a cash register tape, but no machine is involved. The tick sheet must be kept for 3 years plus the current year and the tickets for 30 days following the reporting period.